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A

FUNERAL SERMON

FOR

THE REVEREND

MR. JOHN WESLEY,

Who departed this Life MARCH, 2, 1791, in
the Eighty-Eighth Year of his Age.

DELIVERED

March 10th, the Day after his Interment.

BY ELHANAN WINCHESTER.

Well done thou good and faithful Servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

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A

FUNERAL SERMON, &c.

Dan. xii. 3.

AND THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE AS THE
BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; AND THEY
THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE
STARS FOR EVER AND EVER.

IT is well and truly said by the wisest of men,
“He that winneth souls is wise.*” There is
no business or labour to which men are called, so
important, so arduous, so difficult, and that re-
quires such wisdom to perform it. The amazing
worth of the soul, makes the labour so exceeding
important, and of such infinite concern. He that
knew the value of souls said, “For what shall it
“profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and
“lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in ex-
“change for his soul?”† And the worth of the
souls of men farther appears from the greatness of
the price that was paid for their redemption.
“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeem-
“ed with corruptible things, as silver and gold;
“but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb
“without blemish, and without spot.”‡

* Prov. xi. 30. † St. Mark viii. 36, 37. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

The work of winning souls is therefore very important, because they are valuable beyond conception; as might be proved from many considerations. *

The work of winning souls is not only very important, but arduous and difficult to the highest degree, and requires great wisdom. Men are moral agents, and are therefore so different one from another, that those means which may be highly beneficial to one may not only be useless, but hurtful to another. For the tempers and dispositions of mankind are as various as their faces, and therefore the art of winning them to the ways of truth, and turning them to righteousness, is more difficult, and requires greater wisdom than can well be imagined; for when we have found the method of winning some, we have still to learn and try different methods with others, who are of very different tempers and habits of thinking. And herein the Wisdom, (as well as the goodness) of God is abundantly manifested; for he knowing the infinitely various states of his poor fallen creatures, raises up men of like passions with themselves, to proclaim the Gospel unto them; men of various and different abilities, of different sects, modes of worship, of different

* See an Address to Youth upon the worth of the soul, reprinted in the *Philadelphian Magazine*, vol. i. page 74—79.

manners,

manners, habits of thinking, variously educated, &c. that so all men in general where the Gospel comes, should be able to hear some one or another to their souls advantage.

Winning souls to Christ is rendered still more arduous and difficult, by reason of the powerful enemies that oppose it; the world, the flesh, and the devil, with their numerous hosts, endeavour as much as possible, to hinder any from turning to righteousness; and they must be *wise* and vigilant indeed, who win souls, in opposition, to all these powerful and cunning adversaries.

What renders the labour of turning men to righteousness still more difficult, is, their natural aversion to that which is good, and their proneness to that which is evil. Were they only held in chains of servitude by these foes, against their own wills, the work would be much easier than it is now; but alas, the inclinations of men are generally strongly bent to the service of sin, as all those will find to their sorrow who seek in earnest to turn them from their evil ways.

But what renders the important service more abundantly arduous, and very discouraging, is, that faithful ministers frequently experience to their great grief, that they have all their labour to do over and over again, even where they might have thought the difficulties past, and the work well nigh

finished. This was the case with St. Paul, as he laments in his epistle to the Galatians, in the most pathetic manner. “ I marvel that ye are so soon
 “ removed from him that called you into the grace
 “ of Christ, unto another Gospel *”

“ O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you,
 “ that ye should not obey the truth, before whose
 “ eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth
 “ crucified among you ?” †

“ Are ye so foolish ? having begun in the spirit,
 “ are ye now made perfect by the flesh ? Have ye
 “ suffered so many things in vain.” ‡

“ I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon
 “ you labour in vain.” § “ My little children, of
 “ whom I travail in birth again until Christ be
 “ formed in you. I desire to be present with you
 “ now, and to change my voice ; for I stand in
 “ doubt of you.” || “ Christ is become of no ef-
 “ fect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by
 “ the law ; ye are fallen from grace.” ¶ “ Ye did
 “ run well, who did hinder you, that ye should not
 “ obey the truth ?” **

It was thus that the blessed Apostle St. Paul, lamented the defection of his spiritual children ; and thus it is to the present day ; and there are none who are unacquainted with the subject, that can imagine the heartfelt grief which the true ministers

* Gal. i. 6. † Chap. iii. 1. ‡ Ver. 3, 4. § Chap iv. 11 :
 || Ver. 19, 20: ¶ Chap. v. 4. ** Ver. 7.

of Jesus Christ experience when they find their labour has been thus bestowed in vain.

In treating upon these words that I have read, I shall, First, Endeavour to shew, the wisdom they must possess, the qualifications they must have, and the line of conduct they must pursue, who would win souls, and turn many to righteousness.

Secondly, Shew when men may be said to be turned to righteousness.

Thirdly, That they who turn many from their sins, unto righteousness, have the most indubitable evidence of their being true ministers of the Gospel, and are the most highly honoured of all mankind.

Fourthly, I shall consider the glorious reward which they shall certainly obtain, from the Lord the righteous Judge, at his appearing.

First, What is that Wisdom, &c. which they must possess who would turn many to righteousness? And here doubtless all of you will go in your thoughts before my words. The wisdom which they must have is that which "is from above, which "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to "be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."* Or in other words they must, fear God, and depart from evil themselves, or they will not be likely to turn mankind from their evil ways. The Scriptures abound with such declarations as these, "The fear of JE-

* James iii. 17.

“ **HOVAH** is the beginning of wisdom; a good un-
 “ derstanding have all they that do his command-
 “ ments.*” “ And unto man he said, “ Behold
 “ the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart
 “ from evil is understanding.†” “ The fear of
 “ **JEHOVAH** is the beginning of knowledge.‡”
 “ The fear of **JEHOVAH** is to hate evil.§”

Nothing can be more evident than the absolute necessity of this Divine Wisdom to qualify men to turn their fellow-creatures to righteousness. Without the knowledge and fear of God, all other qualifications will be utterly vain and useless. If a man knew all the different languages that ever were, or that now are spoken in the world, and all the arts and sciences that are in use, yet, unless he truly feared the Lord, and was himself a real convert to the ways of righteousness, he would be utterly unfit for the very important work of turning men from darkness to light, and from the power and dominion of sin and Satan to the service of their Creator. Do not misunderstand me; I am no enemy to human learning: far from it; but, however useful it may be, it will by no means answer as a substitute for the Fear of God, that heavenly Wisdom, nor of itself qualify a man to be a faithful and successful minister of the Gospel.

Those who go forth in this great work must have the most pure and disinterested motives. Their

* Psal. cxi, 10. † Job xxviii, 28. ‡ Prov. i. 7. § Chap. viii. 13.

principles of action must not be the love of riches, nor the love of fame; they must not desire popular applause; the love of Jesus Christ, and a serious concern for the souls of men, must be the ruling principles of their minds, if they would expect to be useful to mankind: for if it is once clearly seen that selfish and interested views animate the preacher, in vain may he hope for success; for if he seeks his own glory, aspires to honours, dignities, riches, or the praise of the multitude, he may bid adieu to all hopes of turning many to righteousness. These unworthy motives, when they appear to actuate a man, immediately blast the fairest prospects of his usefulness, and entirely prevent his success in the work of the ministry.

When our blessed Saviour was about to re-instate St. Peter into his Apostleship, from whence he had fallen, by thrice denying his Lord, the first question that he put to him was this, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.*"

This was the first great qualification which Jesus desired to find in Peter before he would give him charge of the lambs of his flock; and it is in vain for any to pretend to be true shepherds who do not love Jesus above all.

* St. John xxi. 15.

When Peter had answered this first question to satisfaction, Christ proceeded to question him a second time, and we should have been apt to suppose that he would have asked him for some other qualification next; but, behold, the same question is proposed again, “He saith to him again the second time, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*”

No qualification is of equal importance to prepare ~~a man~~ to do the work of the Lord as this of loving him: nothing can be substituted in its room; it is that which he requires of all those whom he appoints as the shepherds of his flock. Without this, they will do more hurt than good. Indeed, how is it possible that any can be able to feed the sheep of Christ, without loving him who laid down his life for the sheep?

But we find that Jesus was willing to examine Peter further in order to his re-ordination; the great Bishop of souls solemnly asks him again, not whether he had this, that, or the other qualification, but, “He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.†”

* St. John xxi. 16. † Ver. 17.

“ Lovest

“ Lovest thou me?” is the great question still. The best qualification that a man can have for turning many to righteousness is the love of Jesus. This is what the Apostles had, which enabled them to do and suffer so much that they might win souls. “ For whether we be besides ourselves, it is to God, “ or whether we be sober it is for your cause. For “ the love of Christ constraineth us,* ” &c. This was that powerful motive, that divine principle, which animated, encouraged, and supported them, and made them such able, faithful, and successful ministers.

They that would turn many to righteousness must take heed to themselves and to their doctrine. This was the exhortation of St. Paul to Timothy, “ Take “ heed to thyself, and unto thy doctrine : continue “ in them ; for in doing this, thou shalt both save “ thyself and them that hear thee.† ”

And again, “ Study to shew thyself approved “ unto God, a workman that needeth not to be “ ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.‡ ”

And to Titus he says, “ In all things shewing “ thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine “ shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound “ speech, that cannot be condemned ; that he that “ is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having “ no evil thing to say of you.§ ”

* 2 Cor. v. 13, 14. † 1 Tim. iv. 16. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 15.

§ Tit. ii. 7, 8.

I shall briefly consider their doctrine, and then the manner of life which they must observe who would wish to turn many to righteousness.

Though it is certain that God hath blest men holding what are called different systems of divinity, and has made their ministry effectual in turning sinners to himself; yet I will venture, partly from Scripture, and partly from observation, to make a few remarks upon this difficult part of my subject.

It is necessary that all preachers should have just, rational, and scriptural ideas of the glorious God, and his infinitely amiable character and perfections. It is necessary for them to represent him as wise, powerful, good, holy, righteous, merciful, gracious, and abundant in loving-kindness, and a God hating iniquity. So far it appears to me absolutely necessary for ministers of the Gospel to agree, if they would promote the good of their hearers. Those who would turn many to righteousness must not greatly deviate from such ideas of the divine character, and must frequently discourse upon these most important subjects.

Again, It will be found necessary to set before mankind their lost and ruined state by sin; to convince them of the evil nature of transgression, in order to make them sensible of their diseases, that so they may be prepared to receive the Gospel remedy with gladness. Much pains and labour ought to be employed upon this weighty and important point; for;

for, as our Saviour justly observes, “ They that be
“ whole need not a phyfician, but they that are
“ fick. For I am not come to call the righteous,
“ but finners to repentance.*” And until men are
made fenfible of their true condition, the glorious
Gospel will never be acceptable to them.

They who would labour fuccessfully in winning
souls must be well affected towards the mediatorial
plan, I question if it was ever known fince the
death of our Saviour, that any minister was blessed
with remarkable fuccess in turning souls from their
fins, unless he had great confidence in Jesus, and
warmly recommended him to mankind. Christ is
the way to the Father, and the only name given
under heaven whereby we must be faved; he is the
way of God’s appointing, and it is therefore incon-
fistent to imagine that God will bless the labours of
those who neglect, despise, and fet at nought the
dear Redeemer.

All God’s faithful witneffes, in all ages, preach
the great and important doctrine of repentance, and
proclaim pardon to the penitent. This subject may
be traced through the Scriptures, almost from the
beginning to the end. I can only give a little spe-
cimen.

In the book of Job it is said, “ If thou prepare
“ thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards
“ him; if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away,

* St. Matt. ix. 12, 13.

“ and

“ and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles,
 “ For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot;
 “ yea, thou shalt be stedfast and shalt not fear: be-
 “ cause thou shalt forget thy misery, and remem-
 “ ber it as waters that pass away: And thine age
 “ shall be clearer than the noon-day: thou shalt
 “ shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning. And
 “ thou shalt be secure, because there is hope: yea,
 “ thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take
 “ thy rest in safety. Also thou shalt lie down, and
 “ none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall
 “ make suit unto thee.*”

In these words the nature and blessed consequences of repenting and turning to God are most elegantly set forth; and if it be true, (as some have remarked) that the book of Job gives a full and just account of the religion of the godly before the giving of the law, then this quotation, undoubtedly, deserves the first place in the specimen which I shall give you of the doctrine of repentance and remission of sins.

In the same book we read, “ He (God) looketh
 “ upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and
 “ perverted that which is right, and it profited me
 “ not; he will deliver his soul from going into the
 “ pit, and his life shall see the light.†”

And again, “ Surely it is meet to be said unto
 “ God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend

* Job xi. 13.—19. † Chap. xxxiii. 28, 29.

“ any more. That which I see not, teach thou me :
“ if I have done iniquity I will do no more.*”

In the book of Psalms the same important subjects are mentioned in a striking manner.

“ When I kept silence, my bones waxed old
“ through my roaring all the day long. For day and
“ night thy hand was heavy upon me : my moisture
“ is turned into the drought of Summer. I acknow-
“ ledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have
“ I not hid : I said, I will confess my transgressions
“ unto JEHOVAH ; and thou forgavest the iniquity
“ of my sin. For this shall every one that is godly
“ pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be
“ found.” And again David says, “ I will declare
“ mine iniquity ; I will be sorry for my sin.†” And
“ in another psalm we read. “ If thou, O JEHOVAH,
“ shouldest mark iniquities, O JEHOVAH, who shall
“ stand ? But there is forgiveness with thee, that
“ thou mayest be feared.”‡

Solomon, says. “ He that covereth his sins shall
“ not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh
“ them shall have mercy. § ” Now we come down
to Isaiah, and his language is, “ Wash you, make
“ you clean : put away the evil of your doings from
“ before mine eyes : cease to do evil ; learn to do
“ well ; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge

¶ Job xxxiv. 31, 32. † Psal xxxii. 3, 4, 5, 6. ‡ Psal xxxviii. 18.

§ Psal. cxxx. 3, 4. || Prov, xxviii. 13.

“the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now,
 “and let us reason together, saith JEHOVAH;
 “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white
 “as snow; though they be red like crimson,
 “they shall be as wool*.” “Seek ye JEHOVAH
 “while he may be found, call ye upon him while
 “he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way,
 “and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let
 “him return unto JEHOVAH, and he will have
 “mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will
 “abundantly pardon.†”

Jeremiah calls to the people in like manner to repent, and return, and acknowledge their iniquity, saying, “Return thou backsliding Israel, saith JEHOVAH; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith JEHOVAH, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against JEHOVAH thy God, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith JEHOVAH.‡”

The language of Ezekiel is much the same, Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of

* Isai. i: 16, 17, 18: † Isai. lv. 6, 7: ‡ Jer. iii: 12, 13:

“him

“ him that dieth, saith *Adonai* JEHOVAH. Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.* ”

Hosea says, “ Come, and let us return unto JEHOVAH: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.† ” “ O Israel return unto JEHOVAH thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to JEHOVAH: say unto him. Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.‡ ”

Joel brings the same message, “ Therefore also now, saith JEHOVAH; turn ye even to me, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto JEHOVAH your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.§ ”

All the Prophets speak to the same purpose, but I shall come down to the New Testament, and see if the same things are taught there.

And here we presently find the same doctrines preached by St. John the Baptist, who came crying in the wilderness. And what was the sum of his preaching? “ Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.|| ” “ Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.¶ ” “ John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.** ”

* Ezekiel xviii. 30, 31, 32. † Hosea vi. 1. ‡ Chap. xiv. 1, 2. § Joel ii. 12, 13. || St. Matt, iii. 2. ¶ Verse 8. ** St. Mark i. 4.

When our dear Lord himself began to preach, his language was the same. “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled; and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*” And when he sent forth his disciples, while he lived on earth, they, in obedience to his command, “went out, and preached that men should repent.†”

After his resurrection from the dead, he said unto his Apostles, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.‡” “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.§”

And after the descent of the Holy Ghost, when the Apostles preached, and many were pricked in their hearts, and enquired what they should do? the answer was, “Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.||”

And afterwards, when the Apostles charged the Jews with the murder of the Prince of Life, they addressed them thus, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,

* St. Mark i. 14, 15. † Chap. vi. 12. ‡ Chap. xvi. 15.

§ St. Luke xxiv. 46, 47. || Acts ii. 38.

“ when

“ when the times of refreshing shall come from the
“ presence of the Lord.*”

And St. Paul said to the Elders of the Church
of Ephesus, “ I kept back nothing that was
“ profitable unto you, but have shewed you,
“ and have taught you publickly, and from house to
“ house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the
“ Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward
“ our Lord Jesus Christ.†”

From all these testimonies, and many others that
might be quoted, it evidently appears, that all whom
God sends to reform mankind, whatever they omit,
do not neglect to call men to repentance. And were
any to pretend that they were called of God to turn
men to righteousness, and did not preach repentance
to them, we might be assured, by that mark alone,
that they were impostors. For there is something so
reasonable in the idea of repentance, that we may be
assured that “ God commandeth all men every where
“ to repent.‡”

Repentance evidently implies that men have
sinned, or there would be no necessity for them to
repent; and that God is able, ready, and willing to
pardon and forgive them, or he would not call them
to repent; and that there can be no pardon granted
to the impenitent, while they remain such, as thereby
all order would be destroyed, sin would be en-
couraged, the importance of repentance would be
set aside, God's character and moral government
injured, and the purposes of the Gospel defeated.

* Acts i. 19. † Acts xx. 20, 21. ‡ Acts xvii 30.

Those who would turn men to righteousness, must not only proclaim repentance, but must hold up the glorious Redeemer as the object of faith, and exhort men to trust in him for salvation. His incarnation, birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, and his intercession there; are all facts of great importance, which it is necessary to believe, and heartily to confess. For the record which God has given of his Son must be received as true, in order to our justification and salvation. The whole process of Christ was necessary for our sakes, and therefore we must give unfeigned credit to the Gospel report in every part, and be willing to trust our souls, with all their important concerns, in the hands of Jesus. Thus frequently salvation is ascribed to faith, because thereby we behold and apprehend Christ, as a compleat Saviour, suitable to all our needs, and rely upon him as such.

Sometimes salvation seems particularly connected with a firm belief in the resurrection of Jesus, as that is a capital article of the Christian faith. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*"

And the Apostle, speaking concerning Abraham's being justified by believing God, and confiding in his promise, says, "And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

* Rom. x. 9.

" but

“ but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we
“ believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord
“ from the dead, who was delivered for our offences,
“ and was raised again for our justification.* ” But

is a rticle of the resurrection of Christ, is not set down as an object of faith exclusively, but inclusively; for, if I believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, I cannot refuse to believe that he was born, lived, died, ascended, &c. Therefore faith in Christ includes a hearty, sincere, and unfeigned belief of the whole record given of him in the Scriptures, and (from a full conviction of our need, and his suitableness as a Saviour) a firm confidence in him as our Redeemer.

Those who would approve themselves as the faithful ministers of Jesus, must instruct their hearers to place their hopes on him, and to seek that “good hope
“ through grace,†” that “maketh not ashamed,‡” which is “as an anchor of the soul, both sure
“ and steadfast, and which entereth into that within
“ the vail.§” This is a good hope, “And every
“ man that hath his hope in him, purifieth himself,
“ even as he is pure.||”

The love of God and our neighbour, or perfect charity, may be truly said to be the foundation of the law and the Prophets, and the very essence of Christianity. And those who would turn men to righteousness must by no means omit this in their doctrine.

* Rom. iv. 22—25. † 2 Thess. ii. 16. ‡ Rom. v. 5.

§ Heb. vi. 19. || 1 John iii. 3.

Obedience to the whole will of God, must by no means be neglected. How warmly the Apostles enforced obedience, even doing the will of God from the heart! Their writings abound with exhortations of this kind, of which I cannot speak particularly. Were I to include as much as possible, in five words, they should be, *Repent, Believe, Hope, Love, Obey.* These are the Gospel in miniature, and include every thing necessary to salvation.

They who would win souls, and turn men to righteousness, must insist warmly upon the necessity and absolute importance of *holiness*; holiness of heart, of life and conversation; or, what some will better understand, *sanctification*. Those who deny the necessity of this can never turn men to righteousness, nor be successful ministers of the Gospel. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,*” is an important Scripture maxim, that should never be forgotten, but be frequently and earnestly inculcated.

The doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, according to the deeds done in the body, is one of the most evident of all truths, both from Scripture and reason, and is, at the same time, very awful, alarming, and important: and they who would turn many to righteousness, must, after the example of Christ and his Apostles, frequently endeavour to represent, in the most lively manner, those invisible awful realities before the minds of their hearers.

* Heb. xii. 14

These are some of those leading and important points that I have found, both from experience and observation, to be exceedingly calculated to alarm the minds of men, and to turn them to righteousness. There are three or four observations more, that I have found true by experience, and which more properly come in here than any where else.

One is, that they who would turn men to righteousness, must not only hold forth these important truths to their hearers, but must do it in such a manner as to impress those who hear them with the idea that the speaker believes, and feels what he holds forth to others. For want of this serious and earnest manner, the effect of many judicious discourses is lost. And where people find nothing in the manner of delivery to engage their attention, they will soon grow weary.

I heard of a Divine who once put this question to an Actor, "Pray, Sir, can you tell me what is the
" reason that your houses of entertainment are al-
" ways so crowded, where you represent fictions ;
" while our houses of worship have so few to attend
" them, although we hold forth the most important
" and interesting truths?" "Yes," says the other,
" I can give you the reason : We represent things
" that are false, as though they were true ; while
" you represent things that are true, as though they
" were false."

It certainly is a matter of great importance, and requires great wisdom to speak *what* we ought, and

ſpeak it *as* we ought, ſo as to have the greateſt effect upon our hearers.

I have made another obſervation, that they are commonly the moſt ſucceſſful preachers, who moſt earneſtly and frequently addreſs their hearers with the general calls, exhortations, and invitations of the Goſpel. Some preachers are ſo tied up to particular ſyſtems, as almoſt to be afraid to mention any thing of the kind to their congregations: but I never knew any ſuch remarkably bleſſed with ſucceſs; but, on the contrary, thoſe who have earneſtly invited mankind in the language of the Scripture, ſaying,
 “ O taſte and ſee that the Lord is good;*”
 “ Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to
 “ the waters; and he that hath no money; come
 “ ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and
 “ milk without money, and without price,†” &c.
 “ Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy
 “ laden, and I will give you reſt,‡” &c. Theſe are generally the moſt ſucceſſful, and have, by far, the greateſt number of ſeals to their miniſtry.

Permit me to make another obſervation, That the Lord moſt frequently bleſſes thoſe who go out of the common road, ſuch as teach not only publicly, but from houſe to houſe, as the Apoſtles did; yea, ſuch as are inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; who venture out into the ſtreets and lanes of the city, the highways and hedges, and compel the people to come

* Pſalm xxxiv. 8. † Iſaiah lv. 1. ‡ St. Matt. xi. 28.

in. Those who, as it were, thus make themselves vile in the sight of men, for the love which they bear to precious souls, such the Lord will honour by giving them success.

Another observation, which will be found universally true, is, that the most successful ministers are such as sow their seed weeping, watering it with their prayers and tears. "They that sow in tears, shall
" reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth,
" bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again
" with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.*" All our success in the Gospel depends upon the divine blessing, and therefore it is necessary to lift up our continual cries to the throne of grace, that God would bless our labours; and those who thus seek earnestly and fervently, are most likely to obtain the desire of their hearts.

But having just touched upon the doctrine which they who would wish to turn many to righteousness must preach, I shall now observe, that all ministers of the Gospel must take heed to themselves; for unless their manner of life is in some good degree consistent with their preaching, they cannot be very successful: the nature of things forbids it. For in case it is not so, the people will be so far from attending to any good advice such an unworthy minister may give, that they will use this proverb. "Physician, heal thyself.†" And as mankind are generally more led by example than precept, it

* Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6. † St. Luke iv. 23.

will be abundantly more likely that they will follow the evil ways of their teachers, than that they will profit by the good counsel they may sometimes give them. Some ministers that I have heard of, who were sensible of their own deficiency in point of conduct, have addressed their hearers with such words as these, ‘ *Do as I say, but not as I do.*’ And this advice our Saviour gave to his disciples respecting the Scribes and Pharisees, saying, “ The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. * ”

But of himself he said, “ Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls†.” And the holy Apostles not only gave good instructions to their hearers, but set them such living examples, as were safe for them to follow. And they accordingly exhorted the believers to follow them. St. Paul to the Corinthians, says, “ For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me. ‡ ” And to the same church he says, “ Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the

* St. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. † St. Matt. xi. 29.

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 15, 16.

“ Jews,

“ Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of
“ God. Even as I please all men in all things, not
“ seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many,
“ that they may be saved. Be ye followers of me,
“ even as I also am of Christ.*” And to the
Phillippians, after he had opened to them the state of
his mind, and his conduct, he says, “ Brethren,
“ be followers together of me, and mark them
“ who walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.†”
And again to the same, “ Finally, brethren, what-
“ soever things are true, whatsoever things are
“ honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever
“ things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,
“ whatsoever things are of good report; if there
“ be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think
“ on these things. Those things which ye have
“ both learned, and received, and heard, and
“ seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be
“ with you.‡” And to the Thessalonians he thus
speaks, “ For our Gospel came not unto you in
“ word only, but also in power, and in the Holy
“ Ghost, and in much assurance: as ye know what
“ manner of men we were among you for your
“ sake. And ye became followers of us, and of
“ the Lord, having received the word in much
“ affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that
“ ye were ensamples to all that believe.§” “ Ye

* 1 Cor. x. 31, 32, 33. xi. 1. † Phil. iii. 17.

‡ Phil. iv. 8, 9. § 1 Thes. i. 5, 6, 7.

“ are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly,
 “ and unblameably we behaved ourselves among
 “ you that believe.*”

All these quotations, and many others that might be made from the Apostolic writings, shew, that the Apostles set such examples that they could safely recommend to the imitation of the believers; and that their great success much depended upon the holiness, uprightness, and purity of their lives. It is therefore necessary for those who would win souls, and turn many to righteousness, to “ walk “ in wisdom towards them that are without.†” And to see that they “ walk circumspectly, not “ as fools, but as wise.‡” When Jesus sent forth his Apostles, he says to them, “ Behold, I “ send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves : “ be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless “ as doves.§” O what wisdom and innocence are requisite for those who would turn men from their sins! and happy are they who are thus qualified for the work. These are such as the poet describes,

“ Their frame is prudence mix’d with love,
 “ Good works fulfil their day;
 “ They join the serpent with the dove,
 “ But cast the sting away.”

It is necessary for the ministers of Christ to have the same spirit and temper in them, that he had in

* 1 Thes. ii. 10. † Col. iv. 5. ‡ Eph. v. 15.

§ St. Mat. x. 16.

himself;

himself; to avoid selfishness, envy, pride, wrath, and every evil disposition: to be governed by the glorious principles of universal benevolence, humility, meekness, and resignation to the will of God. They must desire to glorify God, to honour Jesus, to save their own souls, and those that hear them. They must in all their principles and motives, in all their thoughts, words, and actions, imitate and follow the example of Christ and his Apostles. They ought to be what St. Paul exhorted Timothy to be. “But be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*” “Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.†” “Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.‡”

These are the necessary qualifications of those who shall have the sublime happiness of turning many to righteousness, and of shining as the stars for ever and ever. But alas! “Who is sufficient for these things?§” But God is able, and in all ages he hath raised up and qualified some of the sons of men to be his faithful witnesses, and to turn their fellow creatures to righteousness. May the Lord, who has the residue of the Spirit, increase their number in these days!

* 1 Tim. iv. 12 † 1 Tim. vi. 11, 12. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 22.
§ 2 Cor. ii. 16. i

I come, secondly, to shew when men may be truly said to be turned to righteousness. And upon this I need not be lengthy, as what has already been said will give a general idea of that religion which I mean to recommend. They who are truly turned to righteousness, are such as have been convinced of their undone condition, have seen and felt the evil of sin, have been made to hate and forsake iniquity, to fly from it as from death; and “have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them.*” They are such as have through grace been brought truly to repent, and unfeignedly to believe the holy Gospel; have been made to cease to do evil, and have learned to do well: have acknowledged their transgressions, and obtained pardon and forgiveness at the hand of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. These are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to the service of God. They are truly turned to righteousness, as they have been brought to renounce the ways of sin, and to chuse the service of God for their portion. Or more particularly, they have received the Lord Jesus as their righteousness and strength; He has been of God made to them “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.†” They can now say, “In JEHOVAH have I righteousness and strength.‡” They are justified, or acquitted, pardoned and accepted through

* Heb. vi. 18. † 1 Cor. i. 30. ‡ Isai. xlv. 24.

“ Jesus Christ the righteous.*” They love the Gospel, and are not ashamed of it, “ For therein “ is the righteousness of God revealed from faith “ to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by “ faith.†” They rejoice in “ the righteousness of “ God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, “ and upon all them that believe.‡” They seek to be found in Christ, not having their “ own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is “ through the faith of Christ, the righteousness “ which is of God by faith.§”

But they do not only trust in Jesus Christ the righteous, and in the righteousness and salvation which he hath revealed; but the principles that dwell within them, and by which they are governed, are principles of righteousness and true holiness: and from thence the fruits of righteousness spring forth to the glory and praise of God. Thus they become truly righteous in heart, and are conformed to Jesus in the image and spirit of their minds. Their religion is not like that of the Pharisees, which was wanting in four great articles, “ *Judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God,* ||” those most important things; but they who are turned to righteousness, love God with all their hearts, firmly believe and confide in him; they love his commandments, and delight in his ways.

They who are turned to righteousness, practise it; their thoughts, words, and actions, are righteous;

* 1 John. ii. 1.

† Rom. i. 17:

‡ Rom. iii. 22.

§ Phil. iii. 9.

|| St. Mat. xxiii. 23:

St. Luke xi. 42.

they

they follow after righteousness, and by their conduct prove that they are righteous persons, and are truly born of God.

St. John says, “Little children, let no man deceive you: He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous*.” “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness, is born of him.†” “Who-soever doeth not righteousness, is not of God.‡” So that nothing can be more evident, than that those who are turned to righteousness, manifest the same, by doing righteousness. The very design of the Gospel is to make men holy, and to cause them to bring forth good fruits.

The language of the Prophet Micah is beautiful, and comprehends every thing in a few words. “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth JEHOVAH require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.§”

And the words of St. Paul are to the same import. “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.||”

In this excellent passage our duty towards ourselves is included in living *soberly*; that which we

* 1 John iii. 7. † Chap. ii. 29. ‡ Chap. iii. 10. § Micah vi. 8.
|| Titus ii. 11, 12.

owe to our neighbour is comprehended in living *righteously*; and the obedience and service due to our Creator, is expressed by living *godly*.

This is what I understand in brief by being turned to righteousness; much more might be added, but I forbear, as much still remains to be said of that which I proposed.

I come, Thirdly, to shew that they who turn many from sin to righteousness, have the most indubitable evidence of their being true ministers of the Gospel, and are the most highly honoured of all mankind.

Nothing can be more evident from Scripture, than this position, that those whom God hath not sent, and who are not qualified in some good measure by his grace, for the work of the ministry, and those who do not stand in his counsel, and cause the people to hear his words, shall not profit them at all. God will not bless those with success whom he hath not sent, and he will not send those who are strangers and enemies to him, on this most important errand of turning men to righteousness.

“ Thus saith JEHOVAH of Hosts, Hearken not
“ unto the words of the prophets that prophesy
“ unto you; they make you vain, they speak a
“ vision of their own heart, and not out of the
“ mouth of JEHOVAH. They say still unto them
“ that despise me, JEHOVAH hath said, ye shall
“ have peace; and they say unto every one that
“ walketh after the imagination of his own heart,
“ no evil shall come upon you. For who hath

C

“ stood

“ stood in the counsel of JEHOVAH, and hath per-
 “ ceived and heard his word? who hath marked
 “ his word and heard it? * ” “ I have not sent these
 “ Prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to
 “ them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood
 “ in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear
 “ my words, then they should have turned them
 “ from their evil way, and from the evil of their
 “ doings. † ” “ Therefore, behold, I am against
 “ the prophets, saith JEHOVAH, that steal my words
 “ every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am
 “ against the prophets, saith JEHOVAH, that use
 “ their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am
 “ against them that prophesy false dreams, saith
 “ JEHOVAH, and do tell them, and cause my peo-
 “ ple to err by their lies and their lightness; yet
 “ I sent them not, nor commanded them: there-
 “ fore they shall not profit this people at all, saith
 “ JEHOVAH. ‡ ” Words cannot be more full, plain,
 and positive, that such whom the Lord hath not
 sent, and who are not qualified by him, and who
 do not cause mankind to hear his words, shall not
 profit the people. And if he who has the power
 to bless in his own hand, has declared that their
 words shall be unprofitable, it is not possible for
 them to be successful in turning men from iniquity.
 And how, in the nature of things, is it possible that
 they should turn men to righteousness, when they

• Jer. xxiii. 16, 17, 18. † Ver. 21, 22. ‡ Ver. 30, 31, 32.

do not so much as intend or desire it, and are themselves unacquainted with the ways of wisdom and truth? To suppose that God will send such, or bless them in their ministry, is highly absurd. Would an earthly king send an Ambassador upon the most important embassy, whom he knew to be an enemy to his crown and dignity, and who was not only totally unfit for the employment, but altogether bent upon overthrowing the very purpose of the king? And can any reasonable man for a moment imagine, that God, the infinitely wise, who knows the hearts of all men, will send forth bond-slaves of the devil, upon the important errand of turning men to righteousness? the idea is too ridiculous to admit even for a moment.

But our Saviour not only represents wicked teachers as useless, but as hurtful and dangerous, and therefore he says, “Beware of false prophets, who
“ come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly
“ they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them
“ by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns,
“ or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth
“ forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth
“ forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth
“ evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth
“ good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth
“ good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
“ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*”

* St. Matt. vii. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

“ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart,
 “ bringeth forth that which is good ; and an evil
 “ man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth
 “ forth that which is evil ; for of the abundance of
 “ the heart the mouth speaketh.*”

And to the Pharisees he said, “ O generation of
 “ vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things ?
 “ for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth
 “ speaketh.†”

From these words of our Saviour, we plainly see that wicked men can never be good ministers, and they are so far from being useful, that they are highly dangerous ; and instead of saving the souls of others, they are in the greatest danger of being plunged into perdition themselves.

Therefore it must certainly follow, that such as win souls to God, and turn many to righteousness, are true and faithful ministers, whom the Lord hath raised up, called, qualified, and sent forth. This is the greatest proof that any can desire, and is the most certainly to be depended upon. For it is evident that the very purpose for which Christ sends his ministers forth, is to do good to the souls of men. The commission which he gave to St. Paul is a direct proof of this. “ I have appeared unto thee for this
 “ purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness
 “ both of those things which thou hast seen, and of
 “ those things in the which I will appear unto thee :
 “ delivering thee from the people, and from the

* St. Luke vi. 45.

† St. Matt. xii. 35.

“ Gentiles,

“ Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open
“ their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to
“ light, and from the power of Satan unto God,
“ that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and in-
“ heritance among them who are sanctified by faith
“ that is in me.*” And it is plain that nothing gave
St. Paul and the rest of the Apostles such assurance of
their being truly called and sent of God, as the suc-
cess they had in winning souls to Christ; and their
greatest joy was to behold their converts continue to
walk in the truth. A few passages from their epistles
will confirm what I have said.

St. Paul says to the Corinthians, “ Am I not an
“ Apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus
“ Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the
“ Lord? If I be not an Apostle unto others, yet
“ doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine Apost-
“ leship are ye in the Lord.†” And again to the
same Church, “ Do we begin again to commend
“ ourselves? Or need we, as some others, epistles
“ of commendation to you, or letters of commen-
“ dation from you? Ye are our epistle written in
“ our hearts, known and read of all men: For as-
“ much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epis-
“ tle of Christ ministered by us, written not with
“ ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not
“ in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the
“ heart.‡” And to the Church of the Thessalo-

* Acts xxi. 16, 17, 18.

† 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 3.

nians he says, "For what is our hope, or joy, or
 " crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the pre-
 " sence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?
 " For ye are our glory and joy.*" "For now we
 " live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.†"

And to the Hebrews he writes thus, "Obey
 " them that have the rule over you, and submit
 " yourselves: for they watch for your-souls, as they
 " that must give account, that they may do it with
 " joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable
 " for you.‡" And St. John says, I rejoiced greatly,
 " that I found of thy children walking in truth,
 " as we have received a commandment from the
 " Father.||" And to the beloved Gaius he thus
 writes, "For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren
 " came and testified of the truth that is in thee,
 " even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no
 " greater joy than to hear that my children walk in
 " truth.§"

These passages, and many more which might be
 quoted from the writings of the Apostles, plainly
 shew, that they esteemed the conversion of men, as
 the best evidence of their Apostleship; that it gave
 them the greatest joy to see the believers continue
 faithful; and on the other hand, the most bitter
 sorrow when those who had begun well, turned back,
 and apostatized from the truth.

It is then plain and evident, that such who turn
 many to righteousness, are true ministers, called and

* 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20. † 1 Thes. iii. 8. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

|| 2 John 4.

§ 3 John 3, 4

sent of God; those he will bless, and make them successful, and none but them. These honour God, by obeying him, and he will put the highest honour upon them, by making their ministry effectual for the good of mankind. As it was said of Levi, so it may in measure be said of each of them. “ My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him for the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.*”

O how much better it is to have the joy and honour of turning many to righteousness, than to have the highest fame, and loudest applause of mortals; and all the riches, dignities, and preferments that ever were bestowed upon any of the sons of men on earth! But this naturally brings me,

Fourthly, to consider the glorious reward which they who have been wise to win souls, and have turned many to righteousness, shall certainly obtain from the Lord the righteous Judge at his appearing.

My text informs us, that the *wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament*; or as our Lord expresses it, “ Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father:†” *And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.* When our Lord shall come he shall raise the bodies

* Mal. ii. 5, 6.

† St. Matt. xiii. 43.

of his saints, and fashion them according to his glorious image and likeness. And as he will shine in radiant glory and brightness, so shall they also shine in his kingdom. St. Paul says, “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*” And the beloved disciple says, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.†”

This honour all his saints shall have; but who can conceive the glory which they shall have in that bright day, who have turned many to righteousness? I will spend a few minutes in the consideration of this glorious and important part of my subject.

The work of the ministry is the greatest trust by far that ever was or can be committed to the hands of men, and therefore it is a most difficult and dangerous post; on one hand there are the greatest threatnings in case of unfaithfulness, and on the other the most glorious promises, to those who act well their part.

Often have I trembled when I have thought upon such passages as these. “Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, ‘Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not

* Col. iii. 4.

† 1 John iii. 2.

“ warning,

“ warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from
“ his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked
“ man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will
“ I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the
“ wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor
“ from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity;
“ but thou hast delivered thy soul. Again, when a
“ righteous man doth turn from his righteousness,
“ and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block
“ before him, he shall die; because thou hast not
“ given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and
“ his righteousness which he hath done shall not be
“ remembered; but his blood will I require at thine
“ hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the righteous
“ man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not
“ sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned;
“ also thou hast delivered thy soul.*”

And the words of our Lord are almost as terrible.
“ Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom
“ his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to
“ give them their portion of meat in due season;
“ blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when
“ he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say
“ unto you, that he will make him ruler over all
“ that he hath. But and if that servant say in his
“ heart, My Lord delayeth his coming: and shall
“ begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and
“ to eat and drink with the drunken; The Lord

* Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. See also Ezekiel xxxiii. 2—9.

“ of that servant will come in a day when he looketh
 “ not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware,
 “ and will cut him afunder, and will appoint him
 “ his portion with the unbelievers.*”

These are threatnings sufficient, one would think, to rouse the most secure to look about them, and consider how they fulfil the duties of their stations, and what they have just reason to expect from the hand of the Lord at his coming.

But on the other hand there are great encouragements, and incitements to be faithful in this most important service. St. Peter writes thus,

“ The elders which are among you, I exhort,
 “ who am also an elder, and a witness of the suffer-
 “ ings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory
 “ that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God
 “ which is among you, taking the oversight there-
 “ of, not by constraint but willingly and of a ready
 “ mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage,
 “ but being examples to the flock. And when the chief
 “ Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown
 “ of glory that fadeth not away.†” And the Lord
 Jesus sent his message to the angel of one of the seven Churches, and it may be applied to all true ministers, “ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will
 “ give thee a Crown of life.‡”

These are very great encouragements to faithfulness; and happy are they who endure to the end,

* St. Luke xii. 42, 43, 44, 45, 46. See also St. Mat. xxiv. 45—5.

† 1 Pet. v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

‡ Rev. ii. 10.

who look not back; who endure temptation; for after they are tried, and found faithful, they “shall
“ receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath
“ promised to them that love him.*” The holy
Apostle St. Paul was a faithful labourer in his Lord’s
service; he won many souls, and turned great numbers to righteousness, and was able to say at last, “I
“ am now ready to be offered, and the time of my
“ departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight,
“ I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
“ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of
“ righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge
“ shall give me at that day; and not to me only,
“ but unto all them also that love his appearing.†”

O how vast, rich, and glorious are the rewards prepared for those who have truly loved and faithfully served the Lord on earth! and especially for those who have been the happy instruments of bringing many to the knowledge and obedience of the truth. I will mention a few particulars.

1. They shall receive the approbation of their Lord, the plaudit of their Judge, with the promise of great advancement in the kingdom of Christ, and immediate admission into happiness. “Well done
“ thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been
“ faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler
“ over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy
“ Lord.‡” He that acts in such a manner as to

* James i. 12, † 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. ‡ St. Matt. xxv. 21, 23.
See also St. Luke xix. 17, 19.

gain the commendation of his Saviour, and has this testimony that he pleases God, need not regard what men may think or say of him or his conduct. Lord grant me this approbation at last, and it is enough. Let men scorn and despise me, so that thou dost approve of me, I am content.

2. They shall not only have the favour and approbation of their Judge; but shall receive from his hand a crown of life, of righteousness, of glory that fadeth not away, as I have already observed.

3 Our Lord will invest them with the sceptre or rod of government, according to his promise, “ And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers :) even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star.*” Here glory, honour, dominion and power seem united, and these shall be given to conquerors.

4 The greatest and most amazing promise in all the Scriptures seemsto me to be this, “ To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father upon his throne.†” Who could have believed that such immortal honour, and such high and glorious dignity should be granted by the Lord to any of the sons of men? but he hath promised, and he will perform. He will make his faithful servants partners with him in his inheri-

* Rev. ii. 26, 27, 28.

† Rev. iii. 21.

tance, kingdom, crown, sceptre, throne, power, authority, and all his royal dignities. He will make them kings and priests to God, and they shall reign on the earth. They shall inherit all things, being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and having suffered with him in the flesh, they shall be glorified with him in his kingdom. Truly such may say with St. Paul, “For I reckon that the sufferings
“ of this present time are not worthy to be com-
“ pared with the glory which shall be revealed in
“ us.*” “For our light affliction, which is but for
“ a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding
“ eternal weight of glory.†”

When the glorious Saviour shall come with all his saints, and present his whole Church before the Father, saying, “Behold I, and the children which God
“ hath given me.‡” Then shall all his faithful ministers, who have turned sinners to righteousness, present before the glorious Redeemer the souls they have won, which shall be their joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of their Lord Jesus Christ at his coming. These shall be their witnesses, their seals, the fruits of their labour, their glory and their joy. O with what amazing transports of joy, will those faithful labourers, who have sown the precious seed of the word in tears, shout the harvest home, bringing the ripe sheaves of glory in their arms, safe into the kingdom of their Lord!

* Rom. viii. 18.

† 2 Cor. iv. 17.

‡ Heb. ii. 13.

“ Then

“ Then shall the righteous man stand in great
 “ boldness before the face of such as have afflicted
 “ him, and made no account of his labours. When
 “ they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible
 “ fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his
 “ salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for.
 “ And they repenting and groaning for anguish of
 “ spirit shall say within themselves, This was he,
 “ whom we had sometimes in derision, and a pro-
 “ verb of reproach: we fools accounted his life mad-
 “ ness, and his end to be without honour: how is he
 “ numbered among the children of God, and his
 “ lot is among the saints! * ” O glorious portion
 “ indeed !

Who would not earnestly wish to possess such glory
 as this? then let us all be wise unto salvation, faith-
 ful in our several stations, and endeavour each in our
 little sphere to be useful. Let us all as far as our
 influence extends, seek to win souls to the know-
 ledge and obedience of the truth, and turn as many as
 possible to righteousness, by letting our *light so shine*
before men, that they may see our good works, and glori-
fy our Father who is in heaven, as our Lord advises:
 To which purpose St. Peter thus writes. “ Dearly
 “ beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims,
 “ abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul :
 “ having your conversation honest amongst the Gen-
 “ tiles : that, whereas they speak against you as evil
 “ doers, they may by your good works, which

* Wisdom of Solomon, v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

“ they

“ they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* ”

Let us remember that the Scripture says, “ Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.† ” And that the crown of righteousness shall not only be given to St. Paul, and those who, like him, have turned many to righteousness, but unto all them who love the appearing of Jesus Christ. However humble our stations, and small the circle of our acquaintance, and confined the spheres in which we move, yet, if we are truly wise, and faithful in our lot, we shall gain the approbation of our Judge, and shall *shine like the sun in the kingdom of our Father, as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.*

Let us then improve our time to the glory of God, to the advantage of our own souls, and the good of mankind; that we may be so happy as to hear the approving voice of Jesus, saying unto us, “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ‡ ” and each one of us have the satisfaction of obtaining the plaudit of our Advocate and Judge, “ Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.§ ”

It will doubtless be expected that I should say something of the life, ministry, and character of the

* 1 Peter ii. 11, 12. † Psalm xcvi. 11. ‡ St. Matt. xxv. 34.

§ Verse 23.

late Rev. Mr. WESLEY; on the account of whose death I have delivered this discourse. But in many respects I am totally unqualified to speak any thing concerning him.

1. I am but a young man; compared with him I am but of yesterday, and know nothing.

2. I had but a very slight and small personal acquaintance with him, indeed the little I had could hardly be deemed any at all: I knew him by sight; I have heard him preach; he knew my name; and we have spoke together, as far as common salutation, once or twice, but not more.

3. I never belonged to his society in my life, nor did I receive my religious impressions under his ministry, or that of any of the preachers in his connexion.

4. I have never heard more than about a score of sermons from himself and all the preachers in his connexion put together; nor ever was in half that number of his chapels and preaching places in America and Europe.

5. I was never in my life in one of those little societies, in which his people meet, called, classes.

6. I have never yet given his numerous writings a perusal, having only read some sermons, and other little tracts, some numbers of his Magazine, a few of his Journals, and part of his Appeal.

It may therefore be thought that I have no business to say any thing about him, as I know very little personally, and as others, that are well qualified, have

have spoken, and will speak of him in some measure as he deserves.

But though in all these respects mentioned I am unqualified to speak of him, yet in several others I am as well or better qualified than most, or, perhaps, any person in the world; and what I shall say of him will, perhaps, be as much or more regarded than what may come from any other person, from the following considerations.

1. What I shall say will not be the voice of prejudice, either for or against him. I have no party views, nor any hope or expectation from any party. I am neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian. I seriously wish both those names were buried in oblivion.

When I first came into England, being in company with several ministers, and others, an old Gentleman put this question to me, with great emphasis and importance, "Are you a Calvinist or an Arminian?" To which I replied, "I am neither Calvinist nor "Arminian." At which he seemed greatly surprised, imagining all Christians must rank under one or other of these names. He then desired to know of what religion I was. I gave him the following information: "Sir, my religion is this, I read the "Bible for myself, and what that teaches me to "believe, I sincerely believe, according to the best "light I have, without any regard to what others "may think; and what I find there commanded I "endeavour to practise. I do not rank under the

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standard

“ standard of Calvin, nor Arminius; I know no-
“ thing about them, having never read their works,
“ and I am determined never to call myself after
“ either of their names, or that of any other man.”

This is still my determination, I lean to neither of these parties, neither have I any prejudice against either of them. I wish to embrace them all in one grand system of benevolence. I am determined to call no man master on earth, and I sincerely desire and hope that none will ever call themselves after my name; as there is nothing to which I have a greater aversion. To prevent this, I have hitherto carefully avoided forming connexions, or making separation from churches, or endeavouring to attach any party to myself.

2. I am in some measure qualified to speak of the effects of the labours of those in connexion with the Rev. Mr. WESLEY, having travelled much in those parts of America where his societies are planted, and have had great opportunities of hearing, not only what the friends of the work have said, but the acknowledgments of those who have not borne any great good-will to Mr. WESLEY, or his preachers.

I am not greatly fond of funeral panegyrics, and seldom spend much time in speaking upon the character of any one; as there is oftentimes more spoken upon these occasions than strict truth can justify. And I feel an utter aversion against giving flattering titles to any man, however great or esteemed.

But

But in the present instance I shall not pretend to mention the tenth part that might be said with the strictest veracity; I shall not presume to enter into a detail of Mr. WESLEY's life, this will no doubt be done by the proper persons, who are well qualified for such a work; nor shall I attempt to draw his character, (farther than I trust it will be found to accord with the discourse already delivered,) this I leave to those who are able to do it more justice than I can pretend to have in my power. I shall only mention a few facts of public notoriety, and give my opinion without partiality, and I trust without hypocrisy.

1. Few, if any, in our days, have been so long in the work of the ministry; being first ordained Deacon in the Church of England, (whereof he was a member,) as early as the year 1725; sixty-six years therefore this most industrious man employed in seeking to do good to his fellow-creatures; by ministering to their necessities, both temporally and spiritually. Fifty-two years he was a field-preacher in England; (for he had frequently preached out of doors in Georgia when the houses would not contain the congregations.) He began in March, 1739, to preach in the fields at Bristol, and soon after in other places.

2. I believe that none will think that I go beyond the truth in supposing that he preached far more sermons in his life-time than any other man ever did, or perhaps ever will.

He informs us, in his Appeal, that he preached eighteen or nineteen sermons in a week, constantly through the year, which is almost a thousand sermons a year, and at which rate he must have delivered fifty thousand sermons in his life-time; besides meeting the classes and societies, writing letters and books, performing journies, and a multitude of other labours, too many for me to mention. Fifty thousand sermons may perhaps be a little more than the truth, but if he preached half the number, it far exceeded what any other man that ever I heard of could pretend to have done; and this, probably, is as much less than the truth, as the other computation exceeds it. I will quote the passage out of his Appeal, which is the foundation of what I have said above. He there says to his adversaries, who charged him with a design to enrich himself,—

“ For what gain (setting conscience aside) will
“ you be obliged to act thus? To live exactly as I
“ do? For what price will you preach (and that
“ with all your might, not in an easy fashionable
“ way) eighteen or nineteen times every week?
“ And this throughout the year? What shall I
“ give you, to travel seven or eight hundreds of
“ miles, in all weathers, every two or three months?
“ For what salary will you abstain from all other
“ diversions, than the doing good, and the praising
“ God? I am mistaken if you would not prefer
“ strangling

“strangling to such a life, even with thousands of
“gold and silver.*”

3. I believe I may venture to say that no man ever preached the Gospel to so many people as Mr. WESLEY did in his life. He must have preached to several millions in the whole; for he not only to the last kept journeying from place to place, preaching to very numerous congregations, but he lived so long as to preach to three or four successive generations.

During the time that the late Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD preached, he probably preached to more in proportion than Mr. WESLEY did, but then his ministry lasted but thirty-four years and a quarter, from his ordination to his death. Mr. WESLEY being continued in the ministry nearly twice as long, certainly preached to many more, though likely not to double the number.

Both these men I esteem as faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ; both laboured abundantly for the good of mankind; both fought by all possible means to win souls, and turn many to righteousness. It is true, they differed in some things, but it is a thousand pities such strife and animosity should have arisen among their followers; for they agreed in most points, as I myself can testify, having heard them both. Both declared man's fallen, helpless, undone condition by nature and by practice, and the neces-

* See his first Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion, page 47, 48, seventh edition.

fity of an all-powerful Saviour to deliver him from his state of sin and misery.

Both declared salvation through Jesus Christ to all sorts and conditions of men, and invited all without exception, to come to him by faith, and heartily trust their souls in his hands. Both insisted largely on the necessity of the new birth, and that all men must be renewed in the spirit of their minds, or they could not enter into the joys of heaven. Both held up the doctrine of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law. Both held that men might obtain the pardon of their sins, and the assurance of the love of God, by believing in the name of Jesus; and that men might certainly know that they were passed from death to life.

Both preached up holiness of heart, life, and conversation, or sanctification, as necessary to follow justification, and to fit the souls of men for the glories of heaven. Both believed in God; and in our Lord Jesus Christ. They believed alike of his divinity, incarnation, birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand in the heavens, of his intercession, and his coming again in glory. Both alike preached that salvation is wholly owing to the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, by the work of the Holy Spirit. Both believed in the work of the Spirit alike; that it convinces of sin, leads to a Saviour, reveals Christ in all his offices, and in all his mediatorial fulness to the soul; bears witness with our spirits, that we are the
2 children

children of God, and heirs of glory ; that it is given to all true believers as the Spirit of Adoption, by which they cry, Abba Father : that thereby they are comforted, supported, strengthened, sealed to the day of redemption ; are made active in the service of God here, and assured of an open entrance into his presence hereafter.

In all these things, and many others, these truly great and good men agreed. They were both true ministers of Jesus, faithful in his service, and highly blessed and honoured of him, in being made the instruments of the conversion of many thousands of their fellow creatures. I honour them both ; and what I say of one does not in the least tend to disparage the memory of the other. Both have done well in their generation ; and both have departed in full faith and triumph to their Lord, who has doubtless welcomed both of them into his presence, given to each of them his approbation ; and as both of them did certainly (by that wisdom with which God inspired them) win souls, and turned many to righteousness, so both of them *shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and as the stars for ever and ever.*

4. But now to return particularly to Mr. WESLEY. The good which he hath done, either immediately by his own labours, or mediately through the labours of those in connexion with him, is inconceivable. I have had an opportunity of hearing the fame of this
in

in those parts of America where nothing but carelessness, ignorance, vice, profaneness, and immorality of every kind abounded : Where Sundays were days of diversion, and where there was not so much as the *form* of religion, piety, or devotion before his preachers came thither. I have heard even those who disliked both Mr. WESLEY and his sentiments, say, " These Methodists have done a great deal of good, " by civilizing the people in this country."

But I trust and believe that more than a bare civilization hath taken place in the minds of vast multitudes under the preaching and labours of Mr. WESLEY, and his ministers. At this present time there are more than an hundred and twenty thousand souls in that connexion ; all of whom are believed to be either in a state of salvation, or earnestly seeking it. Yea, and they must evidence the same by their conduct, or they are not suffered to remain in the society. And how great is the number that in fifty two years past, the time since the society first began, have gone triumphing home to a better state, both preachers and people ? These are the seals of his ministry, and shall be for his joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord.

These are his glory and joy, together with all those who are yet in this mortal state, and shall in due season follow him home. If he that converts *one* sinner from the error of his way, *shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*, by preventing

venting them from being committed ; what unknown advantage hath been derived to the world from the almost unbounded labours and surprizing successes of this faithful persevering minister of Jesus ? He certainly deserves great honour and esteem for the good that hath been done by and through him to such vast numbers of mankind. But the applause which Jesus shall give him in one moment, far outweighs all that the whole race of men could give him in an age were they agreed.

But there are some on earth, who are so far from being willing to allow Mr. WESLEY a place in heaven among the blessed, and that he shall be applauded by the Saviour, that they not only positively declare him to be damned, but seem to speak of it with such pleasure and joy, as though they delighted in the idea of his being eternally doomed to have his dwelling in the lake of fire and brimstone. Horrid thought ; that a man who devoted all his life, talents, wealth, and influence to the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind, should be cast off for ever from him that he loved, and constantly served on earth ! But these uncharitable censorious revilers of the pious dead, have yet their religion to seek. It is no great breach of charity to say that their temper shews whose children they are. But in vain have they attempted to intimidate me, and prevent me from speaking in favour of this venerable servant of Christ, whose blessed memory they would wish to

to load with the most bitter, false, and malicious accusations.* But God hath blessed him, and he shall be blessed through all ages, for evermore.

I purposely omit speaking of the piety and holiness of his life, his unbounded liberality, and the many other excellencies of his character, and his happy and peaceful death; partly, because I expect these things will be published by those who are much better qualified than I am for such an undertaking, neither would I wish to interfere with their designs; but chiefly I avoid saying any thing upon those topics, because I only intended to speak of his public ministry, and the success which has attended it, and the glorious rewards which await him in the kingdom of his Lord.

I place myself upon this ground, leaving all other circumstances out of the question, Did he preach Jesus Christ, and full salvation through him to man-

* A letter which the Author received signed *E. Tomlinson*, on the Tuesday evening after he had given notice that he would preach a Funeral Sermon for Mr. Wesley on Thursday evening, was filled with the most false, bitter, and malicious accusations and reproaches against the name and character of this truly great and good man, and the most opprobrious reflections upon his memory, cautioning the Author, and warning him not to speak more than he knew, concluding with these words. "Therefore as a true servant of God, be cautious of setting forth a bad Character."

kind? Did he by his ministry and influence win souls to Jesus, and turn many to righteousness? Did he do much good in his day and generation? If these questions must be answered in the affirmative, it is enough for my purpose; I may in that case affirm, without hesitation, that he shall shine with uncommon lustre in the kingdom of God, and shall partake of all those dignities which the Saviour hath promised to those that are faithful unto death.

If the character of Mr. WESLEY corresponded with that which I have drawn of a faithful minister in this discourse from the sacred writings, (as I doubt not but it did) then we may truly say of him, “He hath fought a good fight, hath finished his course, and hath kept the faith; and henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give him at that day.” And blessed be our Saviour, not to him only, but to all them also who love his appearing.”

F I N I S.



